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GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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Luis Marden

AS "PANAMAS" ARE IMPORTED FOR EXPORT, PANAMA'S HATS ARE HOMEMADE

The so-called "panama" hats now widely worn owe their name to Panama because this Central American republic was a headquarters for exporting them, not making them. They are woven of palmlike *toquilla* leaf fibers—bleached to a creamy solid white—by Indian craftsmen in Ecuador and Colombia and sent to Panama for sale to visitors or for export. But the Panamanian seeks his headsize in a real Panama-made topper of braided palm fiber with spiral black stripes. First the hat-maker braids the fibers into a flat ribbon, then winds the ribbon around a hat form and sews together the edges of the spiral of braid. This hat shop is in Penonomé, southwest of the Canal Zone (Bulletin No. 2).

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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Taman-Kerch Route: German Tightrope Walk from the Caucasus

CAUGHT by the Russian Army's rattrap strategy, German forces in the northwest Caucasus region have found themselves with only two avenues of escape. One is by water, over the Black Sea. The other is mainly by land, over the pair of peninsulas that lack a mile of touching between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

The Taman Peninsula on the east, the westernmost extension of the Caucasus, almost touches fingertips with the Kerch Peninsula, the easternmost extension of the Crimea. But between them lies the slim Kerch Strait, one mile wide in the central narrows created by long sand spits. Elsewhere throughout its 25-mile length the strait is wider—four miles wide between capes north of the center, eight miles wide at its north and south entrances.

Peninsulas Hold Two Seas Apart

Through Kerch Strait the little Sea of Azov, about 225 miles long and only 150 miles from east to west, pours the waters of the Don River into the larger Black Sea. From late November until mid-April, usually the shallow Sea of Azov is choked with ice, which also affects the use of Kerch Strait.

A north-south channel 22 feet deep is maintained by dredging through the strait. The channel is narrow, treacherous, subject to silting and shifting; local pilots are needed to direct all ships. Night passage is rarely undertaken.

For east-west crossing of Kerch Strait, Kerch Bay on the west and Taman Lake on the east offer anchorages that facilitate passage of small boats between the Caucasus and the Crimea. Taman Lake, averaging four miles in width, extends 20 miles eastward between two capes of the peninsula by the same name.

To reach this water gap between the peninsulas would require some hard traveling as well as hard fighting. Nature itself would offer few obstacles on the open rolling steppes of the northwest Caucasus, where the broad, flat expanses have been turned into horizon-stretching farms (illustration, next page). But this is the home of the rough-riding, hard-hitting Kuban Cossacks, whose lusty songs and spin-and-kick dances have made them familiar around the world.

Kerch Called Russia's Pompeii

Approaches to the Taman Peninsula are blocked by the winding lower reaches of the Kuban River, which rises in the glaciers of the Caucasus Mountains and meanders more than 500 miles to its swampy delta at the peninsula's base.

The Taman Peninsula, about 25 miles long, is a lacework of narrow strips of hilly land and shallow lakes. From Temryuk, a grain and fish town of 15,000 near the Kuban's mouth, westward to the village of Taman on Kerch Strait a single highway threads its way between lakes and bays.

Across the strait, the Kerch Peninsula is a broader, drier, more substantial finger of land. At its tip, before the war, stood the flourishing port of Kerch, with more than 66,000 inhabitants. From there a railway runs westward along the peninsula to join the rail network of the Crimea. South of the city are the peninsula's oil wells and asphalt diggings.

Near by are iron mines, once Kerch's chief source of wealth. The city's

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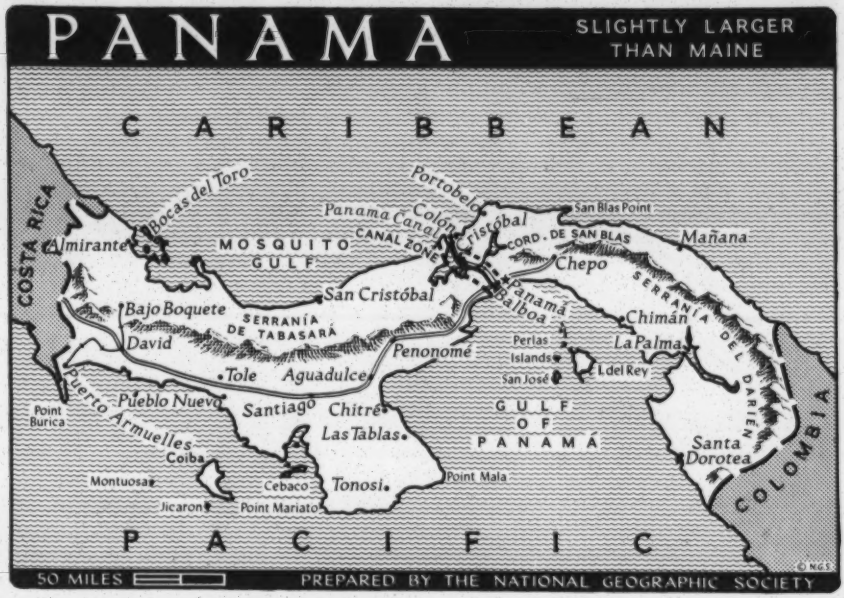

ALL LENGTH AND NO WIDTH, S-SHAPED PANAMA IS IDEAL SHORT-CUT COUNTRY

In this slim neck of land between continents, geography plays strange tricks. The curving shape of the isthmus makes it appear that the sun rises from the Pacific and sinks in the Atlantic. Travelers transiting the canal from the Atlantic side are farther east at the end of the trip than at the beginning.

With an area of little more than 34,000 square miles, Panama nevertheless has an indented Pacific coastline of more than 760 miles and a Caribbean frontage of some 470 miles. In width, however, it narrows to 37 miles, offering an ideal spot for plowing through the isthmus to unite the Atlantic and Pacific. Vasco Núñez de Balboa, in 1513, discovered the Pacific for Europeans when he climbed to "a peak in Darién" where he could see both oceans at the same time.

In the Canal Zone ships can cross from ocean to ocean in eight or ten hours, planes in 20 minutes and trains in 80 minutes.

This was one of the first spots on the American continents to be settled by Europeans (the town of Old Panamá dating from 1519); yet it is still one of the most sparsely populated. The republic counts only about 650,000 citizens. It is also one of the youngest of American republics, having declared its independence from Colombia on November 13, 1903.

Except for Panamá City on the Pacific, the capital city of about 150,000 people, and Colón on the Atlantic with about half as many inhabitants, there are few towns. The most important are such provincial capitals as Penonomé, David, Santiago, and Chitré.

The name of the country comes from an old Indian word meaning "plenty of fish." Off the coasts the fishing is good, and men take tortoise-shell turtles and dive for pearls (off the Perlas Islands) as they have done for centuries.

Panama is a tropical country of fairly constant high temperatures but with wet and dry seasons, and heat tempered by mountain altitudes. Near the western frontier the inactive volcano Chiriquí rises more than 11,000 feet high.

A long stretch of the Pan American Highway runs through the west and central reaches of the republic, but the eastern province of Darién is still almost impenetrable. In its tangled rain forest live Indians who defend themselves with blowguns and poison darts (Bulletin No. 2).

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Panama, a Link and a Gash Between Continents

(This is the twelfth of a series of bulletins, with maps and illustrations, on the republics of Latin America.)

FOR more than four hundred years the Isthmus of Panama has made history and influenced nations.

Today, the Republic of Panama—with an area larger than Maine's and a population smaller than Pittsburgh's—holds an outstanding position as the landlord and next door neighbor of one of the world's wartime life lines—the Panama Canal. Panama has been at war with Japan since December 8, 1941; with Germany and Italy since December 12.

Spain, France, and U. S. Had Interests in Isthmus

Because Panama offered the shortest cut across the land barrier of the Western World, the isthmus early became a prize for governments and a way station for individuals on their way to more distant destinies. Spain's Vasco Núñez de Balboa was the first to cross the isthmus, discovering the Pacific in 1513. England's Sir Francis Drake and Sir Henry Morgan, the pirate, came this way, as did thousands of treasure hunters during the California gold rush.

France bid for an interest in the isthmus through the engineering genius of Ferdinand de Lesseps. After building the Suez Canal, de Lesseps tried a similar feat in Panama in the 1880's, and failed spectacularly.

Finally, after Panama's 1903 declaration of independence from Colombia, the U. S. signed a treaty which resulted in the blasting of the Panama Canal across the young republic's narrow central reaches. This gash, which has been called "man's greatest liberty with Nature," brought the continents closer together by slashing thousands of miles and weeks of sailing time from travel routes.

U. S. Imports Abacá for Rope

The Republic of Panama stretches east and west of the Canal Zone strip (for the most part five miles wide on either side of the canal), leased in perpetuity to the United States (map, inside cover). The people of Panama are of many races, the heritage of their long international history. The 1930 census estimated that half of the people were of mixed blood, with some 79,000 whites, 69,500 Negroes, 43,000 Indians, and 4,000 Orientals. Spanish is the national language, although there are Indian tribes with their own dialects.

Once dreaded for its malaria, yellow fever, and other tropical diseases, modern Panama rates a good bill of health as a result of measures taken by U. S. health authorities to safeguard the building and maintaining of the canal.

In the field of much-needed war materials now cut off from the United Nations through Japanese conquests, Panama is a source of abacá (Manila fiber) for rope, to be used for mooring boats and balloons and for other military purposes. Additional rubber trees have been planted in the republic to help swell the Latin American contributions of this essential product.

Although natural conditions favor farming in Panama, only about five per cent of available soil is cultivated. Many provisions are imported. The government encourages local production of corn, rice, sugar, potatoes, and other vegetables.

Before the war, the chief commercial crop was bananas, of which nearly five

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industries included steel mills and factories producing fertilizer, tools, cotton textiles, sugar, and canned foods. Coal for its mills came from the Donets Basin.

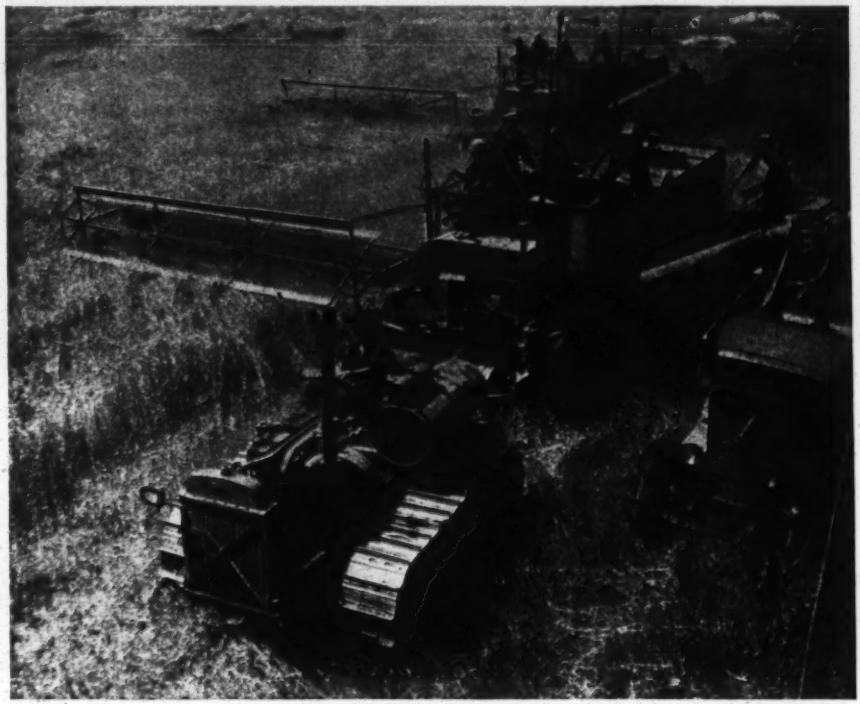
Kerch is called Russia's Pompeii. A cross-section of its ruins is a slice of European history. A mound on the slopes of Mt. Mithridates in Kerch concealed a big stone vault containing golden dishes. The Mound of Cinders, tomb of an ancient Greek king and queen, held the king's golden bow and buckles, his queen's golden diadem, necklace, and breast jewels, and a golden vase. Another tomb, dating from the 4th century B.C., contained what is believed to be the oldest Greek mural existing. A Christian catacomb bears the date 491.

For 2,500 years or more, Kerch has seen wars between civilization and barbarism. Greeks established a city republic there in the 6th century B.C., and called it Panticapaeum. It became capital of the Crimea.

Note: The Taman and Kerch Peninsulas are shown on the National Geographic Society's Map of Asia and Adjacent Areas, which was issued as a supplement to the *National Geographic Magazine*, December, 1942. A price list of maps may be obtained from the Society's headquarters in Washington, D. C.

For further material, see "Roaming Russia's Caucasus," in the *National Geographic Magazine*, July, 1942.

Bulletin No. 1, March 8, 1943.



Sovfoto

MODERN KUBAN COSSACKS CONQUER THE SOIL WITH BATTALIONS OF TRACTORS

In that part of the northwest Caucasus that reaches toward the Crimea, the Cossacks from the Kuban valley once fought with mountain tribes of the Caucasus. The Soviets turned this battleground into vast collective and government-owned farms, served by tractors, harvester-combines, and other mechanized equipment. The tractor-towed harvester-combine in the illustration cuts the wheat, threshes it, sends the grain through a chute to the truck (right), and discharges the straw in the rear. The Giant State Farm of more than a half-million acres was, when it started, the largest wheat farm in the world. This is also a center for sunflower crops. Latest news reports indicate that the Russians are restoring these farmlands to productiveness as they drive the Germans out.

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War Calls the Roll in the Solomon Islands, from B to T

BOUGAINVILLE. Often-bombed Bougainville Island, occupied as a Japanese base since early in 1942, is the largest of the Solomons and the westernmost of the chain. With parts of New Guinea it is under Australian mandate.

Bougainville, 120 miles long and 35 miles wide, is a ruggedly beautiful area of forested volcanic mountains. Mt. Balbi, its highest peak, reaches 10,171 feet. In 1937 a violent eruption of Mt. Bagana thrust this island into the news.

Kieta on the east coast is the capital. Buin on the south coast is another of the few settlements. Much of the land is in coconut plantations.

For 200 years after Alvaro Mendaña discovered and named them, the Solomon Islands were lost. The French navigator, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, who rediscovered them in 1768, gave his name to the largest island.

BUKA. Just across the Buka Strait from the northern tip of Bougainville, in outline Buka looks like the flame of Bougainville's candle. The smaller island has an area of less than 200 square miles and fewer than 6,000 inhabitants (even counting neighboring islets). The natives are unusually strong and intelligent, much in demand for plantation labor and for native police forces.

NEW GEORGIA. The nearest large island on the northwest, New Georgia is only a half-hour's flight northwest of American-held Guadalcanal. It is about half as large as Guadalcanal, of volcanic origin, with forested mountains in the north rising nearly 2,700 feet. Level land in the south, suitable for landing fields, has been used for coconut plantations.

New Georgia has been noted for its huge Roviana Lagoon, enclosed behind 20 miles of islets off the southwest shore. The shores and islets of the lagoon, rated one of the beauty spots of the South Pacific, are normally the most thickly settled areas. More than 2,000 natives, many of them English-speaking, lived there before the war. A hospital and a mission were operated near by.

RENNELL. About 110 miles south of Guadalcanal, Rennell is the southernmost of the Solomons, a flat cliff-girt plateau 50 miles long and about 12 miles wide. Its 1,000 people have barely emerged from the Stone Age.

Rennell is an almost-but-not-quite place. It almost had an export trade in coconuts, but lacked a good harbor for ships. It almost had a good harbor in the broad deep anchorage of Kunggava Bay, but coral reefs make it dangerous.

The Rennellese live in huts that consist of steep roofs without side walls. To get in and out they crawl under the low eaves. They cook on hot stones in a "kitchen annex" beside the hut. The men stain their bodies bright yellow with the dye of the turmeric plant. For money they use the teeth of flying foxes.

SANTA ISABEL. This was the first of the Solomons to be sighted by Mendaña. It is 110 miles long and as much as 25 miles wide. It is mountainous, well wooded, and sprinkled with coconut groves. Mt. Marescot rises 3,900 feet.

The greater part of the island's small population (about 5,000, or one-third that of Guadalcanal) is concentrated either in the Kia area, near Rekata Bay, or in the southern end around Sepi and the government station of Tunnibuli. A few scattered bushmen live in the interior.

Santa Isabel shares with Hawaii the distinction of developing the native sport of surfboard riding, which is little known elsewhere in the entire Pacific. The Santa Isabel native binds bamboo poles together and makes an eight-foot board with a curved and pointed prow on which he rides the waves at 30 miles an hour.

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and a half million stems were exported to the U. S. in 1939. Cacao, coconuts, and cattle hides (to help relieve the U. S. leather shortage) were other exports.

Among Panama's natural resources are valuable timber, a great variety of orchids, and such useful jungle products as tagua nuts (vegetable ivory) and balata gum, a rubberlike substance used for insulating and as belting for machinery.

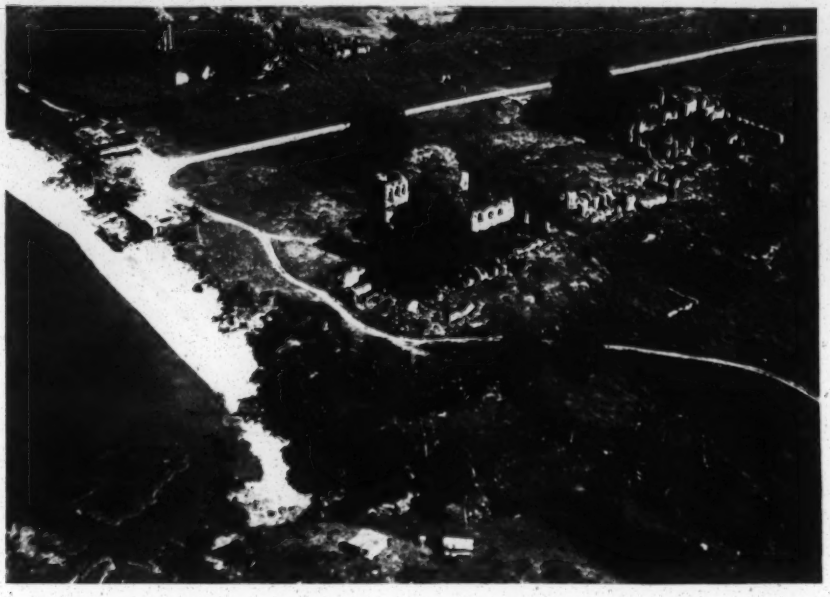
The republic also has operating gold mines and is believed to possess extensive deposits of manganese, aluminum, lead, copper, coal, and asbestos.

Today, in place of vanished tourists and foreign trade, Panama is feeling the effects of vast defense works and expenditures on both sides of the Canal Zone line. Panama has become one of the world's great aviation centers. Land outside the Zone has been leased to the U. S.; new roads have been built, airfields and bases constructed, and men and materials put to work to guard the isthmus and the canal which make this one of the most valuable spots on earth.

Note: Panama is shown on the National Geographic Society's Map of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies.

For additional information, see "Panama, Bridge of the World," in the *National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1941*; and these GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS: "Pirate-Fighting Panama Strengthens Defenses," May 4, 1942; and "Panama, a Pivot of the Americas," November 11, 1941. *(Issues marked with an asterisk are included in a special list of Magazines available to teachers at 10¢ a copy, in groups of 10.)*

Bulletin No. 2, March 8, 1943.



CANAL-GUARDING PLANES ALERT OVER A GHOST TOWN

Patrol planes guarding the Panama Canal can look down on peaceful vine-draped and tree-shaded ruins of Old Panamá (Panamá Vieja). The square tower of St. Anastasius Cathedral, rising (center) near the edge of Panamá Bay, saw fire and carnage in 1671 when Morgan and his marauding pirates, 2,500 strong, attacked the city. The 1,500 Spaniards gathered a herd of wild bulls to help their defense, but even these were no obstacle to the pirates. When the city caught fire, Morgan, unable to discover whether it was set by the Spaniards or by his own band, punished indiscriminately. His reprisal left only the crumbled stones (right center) of massive buildings which had been used to store the gold of the Incas from South America and treasure from the Orient awaiting shipment over the Gold Road across the isthmus for the voyage to Spain. Old Panamá was the base from which Pizarro launched his conquest of Peru.

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Overlapping Near East and Middle East Puzzle Readers

FUTURE generations of Americans, asking Granddaddy to tell about what he did in the war, will be shown medals for valiant service in the "European-African-Middle Eastern" sector, as the War Department now designates a large slice of the worldwide battleground.

Where is the Middle East? Then where is the Near East? And how is there room for both of them along with the Far East?

These terms have been causing mental confusion to newspaper readers and radio listeners, pondering over maps of the Eastern Hemisphere in an effort to find the boundaries of these distant regions where the U. S. is making war.

Broke Vast Orient into Handy Chunks

The names of the three Easts—Near, Middle, and Far—came into use gradually and informally as a matter of convenience. They have never had an official status, and their boundaries have always been rather vague. They served to break into handier chunks the vast misty East—the Orient—that stretched in the direction of the sunrise, from the point of view of Europeans who invented the term.

The Far East emerged first. Although known vaguely since the days of the Roman Empire, its outlines began to appear distinctly when the Portuguese explorers, soon after the discovery of America, sailed around the southern end of Africa, crossed the Indian Ocean, pushed into the Pacific, and nosed along the Indo-China and China coasts. Those strange exotic coastal strips and their still unknown hinterlands became known as the Far East—*far* from a Europe which considered itself the center of the world.

By way of contrast to "Far East," writers began to use "Near East," when referring to the fringe of Asiatic countries nearest to Europe. By American writers and geographers it was adopted pretty generally to apply to Turkey, Syria, Palestine, and sometimes Egypt. In some cases Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and parts of northwestern Arabia were included.

The British Put Middle East into Circulation

"Middle East," at first not in general circulation, was employed by some writers in a hazy way to cover parts of the intervening East. It flared into wide use in the United States chiefly as a military term borrowed from the British, after the beginning of the present war.

By the British, the term Middle East has been used for some time to cover much of what is the Near East to Americans. The Middle East Command of the British Army operates on the east and south borders of the Mediterranean—Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Sudan, Libia and Eritrea. When the war spread into this region, British communiques labeled it "Middle East" and the term was adopted even by American newspapers to which it was entirely new.

If American instead of British troops had been first to guard Egypt's western boundary and to help the Fighting French clean up in Syria, much of the war news that came out of that twilight zone between West and East would have been Near East news instead of Middle East news.

By dictionary definitions, the Middle East would include the strip of southern Asia from Turkey to China. A map inset of the Middle East, published in 1940

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The same tribesmen make great war canoes manned by thirty or more oarsmen and capable of carrying a hundred people. Over 50 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 3 feet deep, they carry the natives on two-month expeditions for fish and turtles.

TULAGI. The seat of government of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate and chief port of the island group occupies the pinhead-sized island of Tulagi, two miles long. The settlement of 100 whites had government offices, stores, a radio station, and a "Chinatown" of 400 Chinese.

Small Tulagi and larger Florida Island outline a mile-square, 100-foot-deep sheet of water that might be called the South Seas' Scapa Flow, because it is island-rimmed like Britain's naval base in the Orkneys.

Note: The Solomon Islands are shown on a large-scale inset on the Society's Map of the Theater of War in the Pacific.

For further information, see "A Woman's Experiences among Stone Age Solomon Islanders," in the *National Geographic Magazine*, December, 1942; "Treasure Islands of Australasia," June, 1942; and these GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS: "Solomons Battlefield of Guadalcanal," November 9, 1942; and "Solomon Islands, Where Marines and Japs Clash," October 5, 1942.

Bulletin No. 3, March 8, 1943.

H. E. Eastwood

THE SOLOMONS BATTLEFIELD WOULD STRETCH FROM NEW YORK TO CHICAGO

The volcano-studded, jungle-clad green islands forming the slim oval of the Solomons group reach across the South Pacific northeast of Australia for a distance of 700 to 900 miles, depending on what lonely outpost islets are accepted as the boundary markers. They would stretch from New York City to Chicago and beyond. On the largest, Bougainville, in the northwest, is the chief Japanese base. Guadalcanal in the southeast, the second largest, is now completely in American hands. Henderson Field is on Guadalcanal's north coast near Lunga (inset, upper right). Many names on this map figure in news stories and letters written home by American troops. For example, Tulagi is remembered as the spot where the U. S. Navy destroyed Japanese ships at the beginning of the historic battle of the Coral Sea.

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Geo-Graphic Brevities

FAID PASS A FUNNEL FROM SBEITLA TO SFAX

FAID Pass went down in history as the scene of a German break-through in central Tunisia, in the first clash between inexperienced American forces and the desperate seasoned veterans of General Rommel's Nazi army. The pass is a gate through the mountains between the eastern port of Sfax, Tunisia's second-largest city, and the western town of Sbeitla where the Americans had set up an air base. Through the pass runs an important highway to Sfax.

On the highway ten miles west of the pass stands Sidi bou Zid, a carpet-weaving village of about 300 natives and a few Europeans. Its Sunday camel market is normally the largest in Tunisia.

Sbeitla, 40 miles west of Faid Pass, is a rail and highway junction. In addition to the Sfax highway, it has a 75-mile railway running northeast to the port of Sousse. A 103-mile conduit carries water from Sbeitla to supply Sfax.

Sbeitla had a European village of nearly 200 inhabitants in addition to the native settlement. The Grand Hotel did a brisk tourist trade with historic ruins as the attraction. In the second century A.D., the site of Sbeitla was occupied by the Roman town of Sufetula, once the focal point of many Tunisian caravan routes. A few centuries later, under the Vandals and the Byzantines, the town reached its greatest growth. It was destroyed in 648 A.D. by the Arabs.

WILLY-WILLY, A FURIOUS WIND, BELIES ITS SISSIFIED NAME

WHILE monsoons are drenching equatorial lands and the wild williwaw is swooping down the rugged mountains of the Aleutians in the North Pacific, Australia's northwestern coast settlements are keeping their weather eye peeled for the willy-willies, which strike any time between November and April.

Willy-willy is a weak name for a strong wind originating in the warm waters of the Timor Sea. Often blowing 120 miles an hour, this cyclonic wind whirls down from the north, sweeps along the northwest coast, whips through the parched interior, and exits by way of the south coast. It may spill up to 20 inches of rain in one brief "blow" over areas ordinarily sprinkled with a scant 12 inches a year.

The native blacks say when the moon is blue the willy-willy is on its way. Pearl divers around Broome (illustration, next page) know its approach when they strike alternate currents of cold and warm water. The sailor makes for shore when the indicator of his barometer dips suddenly or when it stands too steady too long. Old timers, battening down the hatches on their meager possessions in the path of this destructive wind, foretell its coming by sultry still air and black clouds piled high along the horizon.

More than 100 "blows" have struck the coast in the past 70 years. Although generally felt somewhere in the 1,000-mile stretch between Northwest Cape and Wyndham, these winds often turn temperamental and blow far out of their course.

NYLON SWAN SONG ENDS SHORT AND SHEER CAREER

NYLON, as far as civilians are concerned, has gone into a duration blackout. The materials from which the chemicals for nylon are made—air, water, and coal—are still plentiful, but war needs claim them. The nylon that sheerly covered

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on the National Geographic Society's Map of Europe and the Near East, includes the Levant States, Palestine, Iraq, all of Arabia, Iran, and the western parts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on India's edge. The War Department defines its "European-African-Middle Eastern" sector by an eastern boundary cutting south through Russia, around Iran's eastern border, and due south from there through the Indian Ocean.

Little effort has been made to define the three Easts on strictly geographic grounds. In some cases the names, used arbitrarily and for special purposes, have become catchalls. The U. S. State Department's Division of the Near East embraces not only countries at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, but also all of Africa except Algeria and the Union of South Africa—even Liberia on Africa's tropical Atlantic coast, 2,400 miles southwest of Egypt.

If the East were divided according to geographic considerations, one logical basis would be the seas on which the countries face. In the Near East would fall all states facing the eastern end of the Mediterranean, from Turkey to Egypt. In the Middle East—a huge area—would be included the countries bordering the Indian Ocean, from Arabia and Iraq through India and Burma. In the Far East would fall the lands of the Asiatic mainland washed by the waters of the Pacific, from the Malay Peninsula through China, and including, at least, the Soviet Union's Maritime Province.

Offshore, Japan and the Philippines are regarded as part of the Far East. The islands of the Netherlands Indies—or, more inclusively, the Malay Archipelago—are at times referred to as a portion of the Far East, but more frequently they are classed separately, as is Australia.

Note: The Near and Middle East are shown on the National Geographic Society's Map of Asia and Adjacent Areas, which was issued as a supplement to the December, 1942, number of the *National Geographic Magazine*. The Map of Europe and the Near East has a special inset showing the Middle East.

Bulletin No. 4, March 8, 1943.

Pasi from Three Lions

NEAR OR MIDDLE, THE EAST FACES WEST

The Moslem kingdom of Iraq would be part of the Middle East if classified on the basis of its frontage on a gulf of the Indian Ocean. Yet its road markers, in addition to the typical Near East-Middle East Arabic script, have place names in the Roman letters used in the West and distances measured in the kilometers introduced by France. (Ramadi is on the Euphrates, west of Baghdad on the Tigris.)

milady's legs will now blossom as parachutes over the heads of thousands of American paratroopers.

Having abandoned hope of any more nylon hose, feminine shoppers have been puzzled by displays of other nylon products such as nylon fleece coats and nylon dresses. Toothbrushes and hairbrushes bristled with nylon didn't disappear when the sheer hosiery made its requested exit. Spun nylon stockings of wooly texture, and nylon underwear and sweaters have appeared on the market.

The explanation of these presumably "new" nylon products is that they are not new, but leftovers from pre-war days. They were made from "spinner's waste" or "regenerated" nylon—the small lopped-off and chopped-up bits that accumulated as waste during the manufacturing process. The short leftover fragments were not suitable for sheer stockings, which require nylon yarn made from long continuous filaments.

First discovered in 1935, nylon filament was eventually produced in quantity, winding onto huge spools or cones at the rate of approximately a half-mile a minute. In 1938 a few hosiery manufacturers experimented with nylon, and a few pairs of stockings trickled onto the market late the next year. By 1940 the first commercial nylon hosiery plant was operating. In 1942 all long-filament nylon was earmarked for war purposes.

Before long, however, even the "waste-nylon" products will follow the sheer stockings into military service. Along with worn-out nylon hose now being collected, the waste material will be "boiled over" and made into new nylon for war use.

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William Jackson

DEATH-DEALING WILLY-WILLIES ARE A PERIODIC MENACE TO PEARL DIVERS

The violent storm-laden winds known as the willy-willies sweep over Australian waters where the pearl divers off Broome carry on their unusual occupation, hazardous enough even in good weather. The little vessels of the pearling fleet must make violent efforts to reach port safely during these storms. A sudden "blow" may wreck a vessel and send divers and fishermen to a gloomy graveyard for Asiatics at Broome, where epitaphs are carved in Japanese, Chinese, and Malay tongues. Flowers and plants in bottles at the foot of tombstones are tributes to the dead. Much of the mother-of-pearl shell used around the world has been brought up from the ocean depths by the Broome pearling fleet.

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